

Volunteers: The heart of our community

By Col. Doug Richardson
48th Fighter Wing commander

The word "volunteer" is one we all recognize and understand. After all, every member of our armed forces is a volunteer.

This month, however, we pay tribute to a special kind of volunteer who's often overlooked in our day-to-day operations. Although they're not paid for their work, their absence would have a very serious impact on our quality

of life, and in some cases, our ability to get the mission done right.

These volunteers are the hundreds of men and women at RAF Lakenheath who are present in dozens of organizations throughout the Liberty Wing. Working within organizations such as the base hospital, library, youth center, chapel, American Red Cross, the retiree affairs office, the family support center and many more, these selfless people give their time and skills free of charge so

that our community is a better place. It's because of this selflessness that our volunteers really make up the heart of our community.

We have planned many activities for volunteers this month to recognize them for their outstanding efforts and support. If your unit has volunteers, make sure to take the time to show them your appreciation — do something for them, not just during National Volunteer Recognition Month, but all year round. They deserve

no less for all they've contributed. The family support center has tons of ideas on how you and your unit can do this.

Volunteers are a special part of our community. They're often behind the scenes in jobs that may not get a lot of visibility or recognition, but they're as vital to the mission as their active-duty volunteer counterparts. Let's use April as an opportunity to celebrate their contributions in helping the Liberty Wing become the USAFE's best community!

Education is key to combating terrorism

By Maj. Dean Tow
Local AFOSI commander

As the tragedies of Oklahoma City and Khobar Towers, in which Americans lost their lives in terrorist bombings demonstrated, all of us must continue our efforts to combat terrorism. In order to better combat terrorism, we need to understand the objectives and methods of terrorist groups and

how we can minimize our risk to terrorist attack.

Generally, terrorists are dedicated, well-educated people who believe they are participants in a dynamic social or political process. These people cannot achieve the changes they desire through the normal political process.

Most acts of terrorism are committed to gain publicity for an organization and to achieve political goals, or to obtain arms or financing for future operations. By performing sensational acts that attract media attention and outrage from the public, terrorists seek a government reaction that will further their cause. For example, if terrorists are alleging that the government is oppressive, they may bomb a public square to cause mass casualties. They hope the government will restrict public freedoms (perhaps in the interest of safety) but which the terrorists will characterize as government oppression. By turning the people against their own government, the terrorists hope to start a revolution that will leave them in power.

Most terrorist operations are planned in detail and carried out with practice runs and rehearsals to insure success. Terrorists seek to exploit the target's vulnerabilities and, with the exception of suicide attackers, minimize their own risk.

For the most part, terrorist attacks are limited to six basic forms: bombings, assassinations, armed assault, kidnapping, barricade and hostage situations, and hijackings. Bombings are the most common. All are, in their most basic form, simple criminal acts. The manner in which they are carried out, the victims who are targeted, and the desired media and political outcome are the only differences between terrorists and common criminals.

To reduce terrorism and crime we must all help our military and host-nation security forces. By improving our personal awareness and using common-sense practices, we can help prevent criminal and terrorist attacks.

Without opportune targets, would-be perpetrators turn their attention elsewhere. As you lessen your personal vulnerabilities, you reduce the likelihood that you will become a victim.

Here are various measures you can take to lessen your vulnerability both on and off base:

☐ Do not discuss your military affiliation with strangers.

☐ Learn about the area, the culture, local customs, history or criminal activity and local laws.

☐ Lower your profile by wearing clothing that blends with your environment. Avoid distinctive American attire like American sports team clothing and baseball caps. This not only benefits your personal safety, but also fosters better host nation relations.

☐ Stay away from known "trouble spots," demonstrations, and political rallies.

☐ Do not flash large sums of money.

☐ When traveling, avoid military-style luggage such as B-4 bags and duffel bags.

☐ One man's trash is another man's treasure. Remember this when discarding personal documents, such as bills and statements, which could establish patterns of where you shop, bank and have your car repaired. Terrorist groups and other hostile intelligence collectors have used this as an easy way of gathering information.

☐ Keep your official passport and related documents in a secure place.

☐ Keep your vehicle locked and vehicle registration out of sight when off-base. Park in secure lots when possible.

Although the terrorist threat in the United Kingdom is low to Americans, terrorist groups operate within the United Kingdom and have targeted government offices, installations, airports and city centers. Americans traveling within the United Kingdom need to be aware of their surroundings and heed all warnings by the police. For travel through other European countries, AFOSI Det. 512 has travel briefings available. For more information, call Ext. 1852.

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On the cover

Photo by SSgt. Steve Ball

Volunteer Cristal Grebner helps SrA. Adam Despres with a framing project at the arts and crafts center. For more on volunteering, see pages 12 - 14.